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INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PREPARATION
OF FITNESS REPORTS

25X1 These instructions describe the general procedures for initiating and processing Fitness Reports in accordance with Regulation and provide detailed instructions for the preparation of Fitness Reports.

1. Background

a. Purpose and Use of Fitness Reports

The Fitness Report provides a record of supervisors' opinions concerning the effectiveness of an employee. Its primary purpose is to report this information in a form which will make it available to officials responsible for the efficient utilization and development of the individual.

The Fitness Report is designed to report the manner in which an employee performed his specific assignment during a specified time and the supervisor's observations concerning his characteristics during that time. It should not be influenced by previous evaluations or reports concerning his performance in other assignments at other times. A single Fitness Report records a supervisory estimate of an employee's potential value to the organization based on his observations during the time covered by that report.

b. Relationship of Fitness Report to Day-by-Day Supervision

The observations and contacts involved in day-to-day supervision serve as the basis for the opinions recorded on the Fitness Report. The responsibility of supervisors for rendering periodic Fitness Reports must not be confused with their responsibility for day-to-day supervision and instruction of employees under their jurisdiction. Each supervisor is responsible for making a continuous effort to correct deficiencies and to stimulate improvement in employees under his jurisdiction and for making clear to them the opinion he holds concerning their work. Required corrective action should not be delayed until the preparation of a Fitness Report but should be taken when the need for it is observed. Interviews needed to let an employee know where he stands should likewise be held when needed and not postponed until the Fitness Report is rendered.

2. General Instructions

a. Rating Principles

(1) Fitness Reports are of such far reaching importance that the greatest of care must be exercised in their preparation. Close attention to these instructions and those on the form is required to ensure proper completion.

(2) Evaluations by the rater must be based on:

- (a) What the employee has been observed or known to do or fail to do.
- (b) His typical performance of duty; not on a few isolated or striking incidents.
- (c) Observation of the rated employee in the performance of duty.

(3) Conscious effort should be made throughout the rating period to observe the rated employee in terms of the elements which will be rated, in order to provide the proper factual basis for evaluation.

(4) Avoid overrating. Giving a rating higher than that merited by performance on the job is unfair not only to other employees but to the individual himself. Overrating an employee may lead to assignments for which he is not qualified.

(5) Avoid underrating. Giving a lower rating than is merited is also unfair to the rated employee. The ideal is to give ratings that are neither higher nor lower than are merited by the rated employee's actual performance.

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(6) Throughout the report, the rated employee is to be evaluated in comparison with others of similar GS level, branch, and length of service.

(7) The statements in Sections IV and VI are to be interpreted literally, in their commonly accepted dictionary meaning. These statements have been carefully selected after consulting with experienced personnel. If all raters do not interpret these statements literally, the positions of rated employees relative to other employees of the same GS level, branch and length of service will be seriously distorted.

(8) In the absence of facts on which to base ratings, no ratings should be made. The system recognizes that in some cases the specialized nature of contacts with the rated employee, or the necessary limitation of such contacts, makes adequate observation or evaluation impossible or very difficult. Thus, the "Not observed" column may be marked in some sections of the report.

(9) After completing the Fitness Report, the supervisor should review his work to ensure that he has accurately reflected his judgment of the employee. If, in this review, he finds that changes should be made in the ratings which he has given, he should make these changes before submitting the report to the Reviewing Official.

b. Responsibility of Reviewing Official

When the Reviewing Official receives a report containing entries which in his judgment are not warranted, whether favorable or adverse to the rated individual, he should incorporate his views in a memorandum attached to the report. However, he is not authorized to make or to require any changes in the rating supervisor's evaluations. If the reviewer feels that a supervisor consistently does a poor job in rendering Fitness Reports, he should reflect this belief in the next Fitness Report he prepares on that supervisor.

3. Specific Instructions

a. Section I, Items 1 through 13 (Identifying Data)

Administrative Officer: Complete all items in this section of the report. If the report is being completed at headquarters, enter the employee's name as it is listed in official records. The report is due 15 work days following expiration of the period covered by the report. The period of the report will begin in all cases with the day following the last day covered in the preceding report if there has been a previous report. It will end with the date of the occurrence which is the cause of the report.

b. Section II, Items 1 and 2 (Current Position, Date Assumed Responsibility)

Supervisor: Enter the official job title for the position. "Intelligence Officer" alone is not specific enough. Enter the date on which the individual was assigned to this position in 2.

c. Section II, Item 3 (Specific Assignments to Tasks)

Supervisor: On reports completed at headquarters, write a brief description of the tasks which are typical of those he was given during the last 3 to 6 months covered by the report. Present these in order of frequency from most often performed to least. This helps provide a picture of the kinds of assignments in which the man's performance is being rated. In the field, this section should be completed with due regard for security considerations.

d. Section III

Supervisor and Reviewing Official: (Note: In the field these officials will complete this section on the Field Fitness Report Transmittal Sheet.) After completion of report and all necessary memoranda and interviews, the supervisor should indicate whether or not he has shown (or will show) the report to the employee by checking the appropriate box, entering the date and his signature and transmitting the completed forms to the reviewing official. After reviewing the report and preparing any memoranda necessary, the reviewing official will enter the date and his signature and transmit the forms to the Administrative or Personnel Officer of his Operating Component, or headquarters, if in the field.

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e. Section IV, Items 1 through 50

Supervisor: The statements in this section are to be interpreted according to the commonly accepted dictionary definitions of the words used. Read each statement carefully and decide which category on the right best tells how much the statement applies to the person you are rating. Each category is subdivided into three blocks to allow the supervisor to make finer distinctions if he so desires. Place an "X" in the box which best describes the degree to which the statement applies to the person being rated. An "X" in the "Not Observed" column means you have no basis for an opinion on whether the phrase applies to the individual. Placing an "X" in the "Does Not Apply" column means that you have the definite opinion that the description is not at all suited to the individual.

The supervisor's ratings in this section are not favorable or unfavorable in themselves, but acquire their meaning in relation to a particular job or assignment.

f. Section V, A through E. (Outstanding strengths and weaknesses, supervision and training required, other comments)

Supervisor: The descriptive material in this section should be prepared after the ratings in Section IV have been completed. However, some supervisors may find it helpful first to note a few observations concerning the rated employee's performance to aid in accomplishing both the rating scales and the comments. The purpose of this section is to provide a picture, in the supervisor's own words, of the rated employee as seen by the supervisor during the period of the report. This type of narrative should be useful to officials in interpreting the report.

Items A and B should describe any outstanding strengths and weaknesses affecting the employee's ability to perform certain assignments.

Item C should contain any strength or weakness which outweighs all other considerations in utilizing this employee and indicate why this is so.

Item D should contain the supervisor's evaluation of whether or not the employee requires close supervision. If you feel that he does, give a brief statement explaining your reasons.

Item E should contain the supervisor's recommendation for further training of the employee.

Item F should contain facts not appearing elsewhere in the report which the reporting supervisor would want to know about the rated employee if he were considering him for an assignment, any special physical, mental, or personal characteristic affecting the rated employee's ability to perform assignments and all other pertinent factors not included elsewhere in the report.

(1) Emphasis should be placed upon those points in an employee's makeup which point to and illustrate his present and future value. This means that a description of some characteristics may become a part of this word picture, even though they do not at the present time affect the efficiency of the employee being rated. If they have a probable bearing upon his future efficiency, they may be made a part of this estimate. For instance, it might be said of an employee that he is intelligent, has a comprehensive knowledge of his profession, and performs his duties diligently and energetically. However, he is inclined to believe that his subordinates should be able to grasp a subject and analyze it as quickly as himself. This is an illustration of a minor deficiency that may become greater as time goes by. While it may have no direct bearing on his present efficiency, it may later be the cause of rating his leadership lower than would otherwise be the case. Then there is the employee who is intelligent but is inclined to become nervous when required to make a decision except in those cases where he can fall back on personal experience. This characteristic may entirely disappear as he gains more experience and has more knowledge to fall back on. Although this trait may affect his present efficiency, he may be potentially a better employee than his present rating would indicate.

(2) In some cases, an employee may be described in a manner that would indicate he already has acquired detrimental characteristics which seemingly cannot be improved. For instance, an employee is a slow, methodical thinker, not entirely certain of his decisions and likely to procrastinate when faced with a controversial or extraordinary problem. Being a slow, methodical thinker, it may be doubtful whether he will ever be able to reach the point where he can make quick decisions.

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(3) The faults of most persons are known to themselves. Often they will attempt to cover them by diverting the attention of the person observing them. Most supervisors are familiar with some of these types. There is the handshaker, the good fellow, the braggart, the loud talker, the one who presents every detail of his daily performance to the rating supervisor, and various other phases of this covering process. Virtues, on the other hand, may be hidden by inexperience, by circumstances involving an employee which may temporarily affect his efficiency, and by many other factors. Potentialities for improvement are usually evident, and indications of a trend in that direction can be analyzed and put into words by the reporting supervisor.

(4) Avoid trite adjectives and stereotyped phrases. For example, no word picture is provided by the following comments:

"An excellent employee, conscientious and dependable at all times. With training and experience he will give a good account of himself."

"This employee's general value to the organization is reflected in his organization which always has given a maximum of performance. His general value is superior."

These statements do not describe the employee; they merely amplify a rating given on the report form. The comments should be spontaneous and meaningful descriptions of the employee as an individual, his strong points and weak points as a personality, and not primarily a repeat evaluation of his efficiency on his present job. They should answer the question, "What things are most likely to be remembered about him as a person--things likely to explain his future failure or success?" Years later, a reading of these comments should recall to the mind of the reporting supervisor a mental picture of the employee in question.

(5) The comments about the rated employee should include the qualities, or evidences thereof, which have most strikingly impressed themselves upon the mind of the reporting supervisor as being typical of the rated employee's behavior, as well as his characteristic strengths or weaknesses.

g. Section VI, Items A through D (overall ratings)

Supervisor: The supervisor should read every description under an item before rating. After reading each description, he then decides which statement best describes the rated employee and places an "X" in the box before it. The rating principles described in Section 3, Paragraph 1, apply equally to these scales.

Item A is concerned with the skill with which the employee performed his job. After checking the most appropriate statement, decide if this employee is or is not better qualified for work in some other area and check the appropriate box. If he is better qualified in another area, name the area in the space provided. A check in item 1 will be construed to mean the employee's performance was unsatisfactory.

Item B asks for your evaluation of the individual's potentiality for promotion.

Item C requires the supervisor to assess the employee's attitude toward the organization.

Item D is a final overall evaluation of the rated employee's suitability for work in this organization. In making this rating take all you know about the person into account, weighing the information according to your judgment of its importance. It is in this rating that a supervisor can reflect explicitly his opinion of the individual's general worth to the organization. A check in item 1 will be construed to mean the employee's performance was unsatisfactory.

h. After making all ratings and descriptive material be sure to complete Section III and route the reports as prescribed in applicable regulations.

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